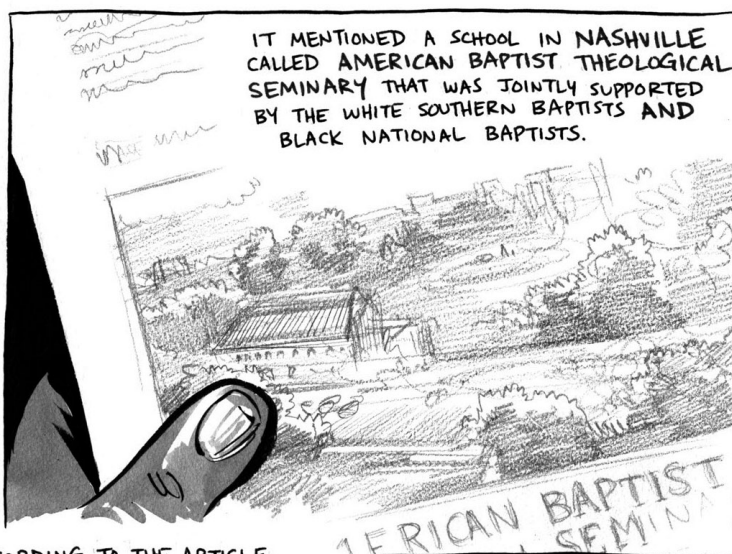


WASHINGTON, DC — 8:51 AM, JANUARY 20, 2009





MY MOTHER HAD A PART-TIME JOB WORKING AT THE WHITE BAPTIST OFFERING HOME IN DOWNTOWN TROY, ALABAMA.



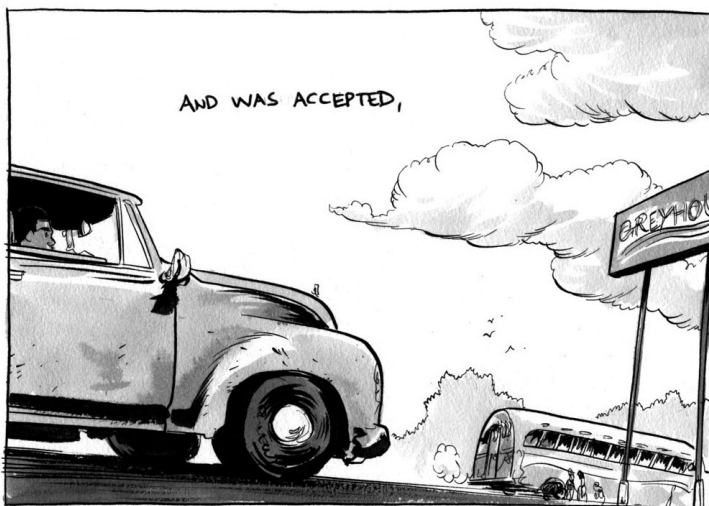
ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, IT WAS A SCHOOL FOR BLACK MEN AND WOMEN TO STUDY TO BECOME MINISTERS OR MISSIONARIES-- AND IT OFFERED A WORK-STUDY PROGRAM ON CAMPUS.



SO I APPLIED TO  
GO TO SCHOOL THERE,



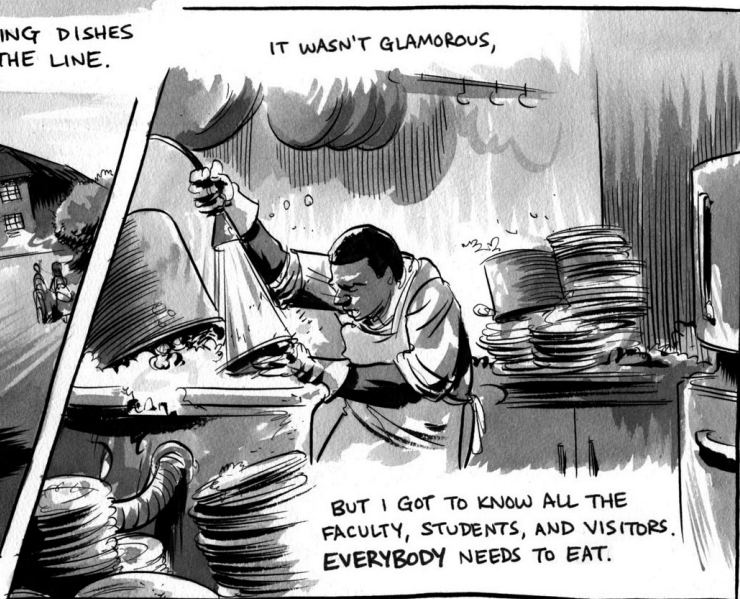
AND WAS ACCEPTED,



AND I GOT A JOB WASHING DISHES  
AND SERVING FOOD ON THE LINE.



IT WASN'T GLAMOROUS,



BUT I GOT TO KNOW ALL THE  
FACULTY, STUDENTS, AND VISITORS.  
EVERYBODY NEEDS TO EAT.

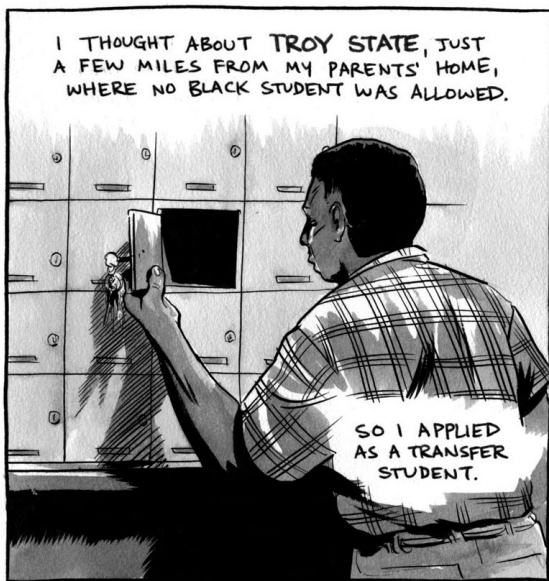
I LOVED THE NEW IDEAS COLLEGE  
WAS INTRODUCING ME TO, IN  
RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY--  
BUT I COULDN'T STOP THINKING  
ABOUT THE SOCIAL GOSPEL.

HERE I WAS READING ABOUT  
JUSTICE, WHEN THERE WERE  
BRAVE PEOPLE OUT THERE  
WORKING TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.



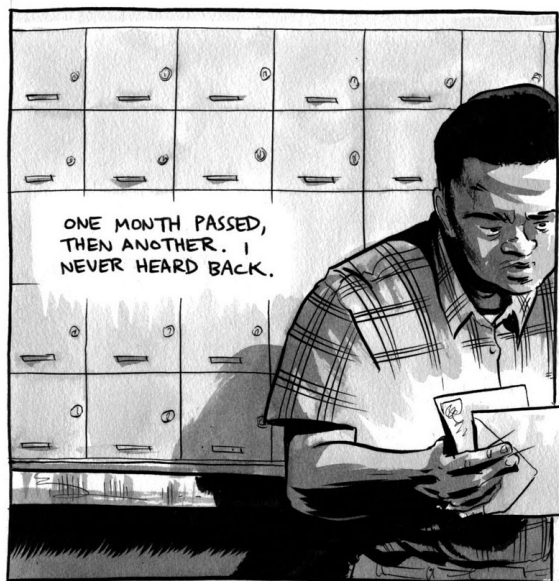
I STARTED TO FEEL GUILTY  
FOR NOT DOING MORE.  
I BECAME RESTLESS.





I THOUGHT ABOUT TROY STATE, JUST A FEW MILES FROM MY PARENTS' HOME, WHERE NO BLACK STUDENT WAS ALLOWED.

SO I APPLIED AS A TRANSFER STUDENT.



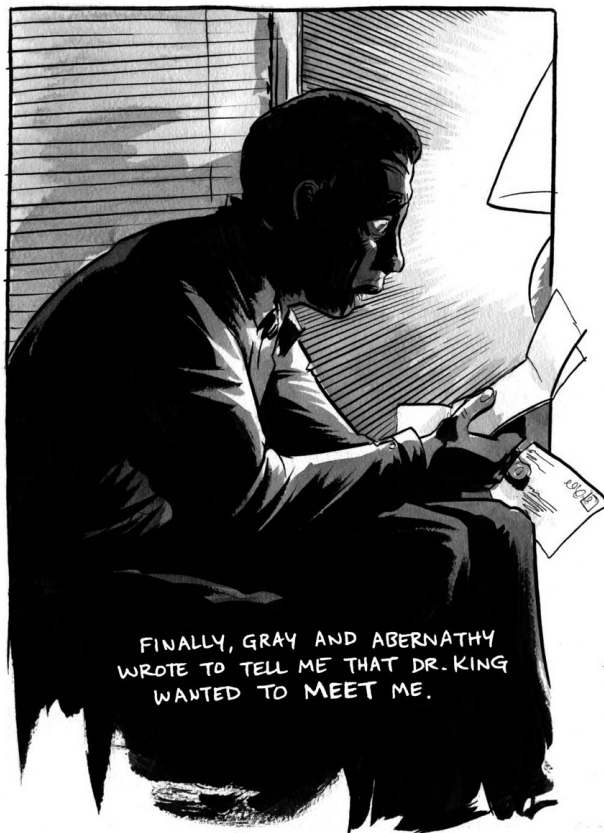
ONE MONTH PASSED, THEN ANOTHER. I NEVER HEARD BACK.

FINALLY, I DECIDED TO INTRODUCE MYSELF TO THE ONLY PERSON WHO I THOUGHT COULD UNDERSTAND WHAT I WAS TRYING TO DO :

To Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Please excuse ~~the~~ <sup>my</sup> writing this. I would like to introduce myself.  
John Robert Johnson

OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS I EXCHANGED A SERIES OF LETTERS AND PHONE CALLS WITH REV. RALPH ABERNATHY AND A LAWYER NAMED FRED GRAY.

EVERYONE KNEW FRED GRAY. HE REPRESENTED ROSA PARKS, AND WAS NOW DR. KING'S ATTORNEY.



FINALLY, GRAY AND ABERNATHY WROTE TO TELL ME THAT DR. KING WANTED TO MEET ME.





ONE SATURDAY MORNING IN THE SPRING OF 1958, MY FATHER DROVE ME TO THE GREYHOUND BUS STATION AGAIN.

NEITHER OF US SAID A WORD.



I BOARDED A BUS, AND TRAVELED THE FIFTY MILES FROM TROY TO MONTGOMERY.



I'D NEVER SEEN A LAWYER BEFORE-- BLACK OR WHITE.

NOK  
NOK

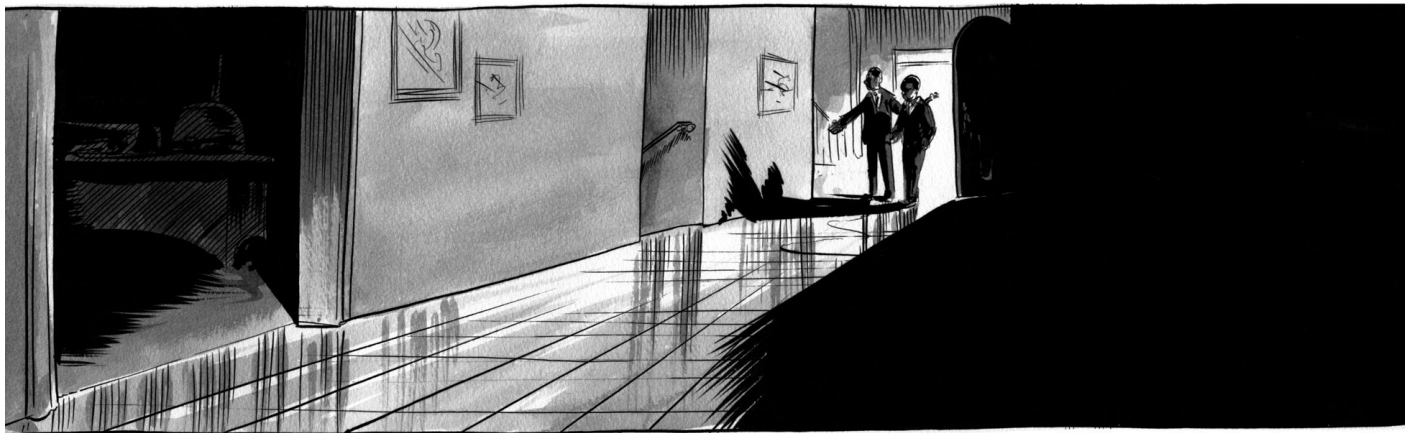
them



AND I PRESUME YOU'RE JOHN LEWIS?

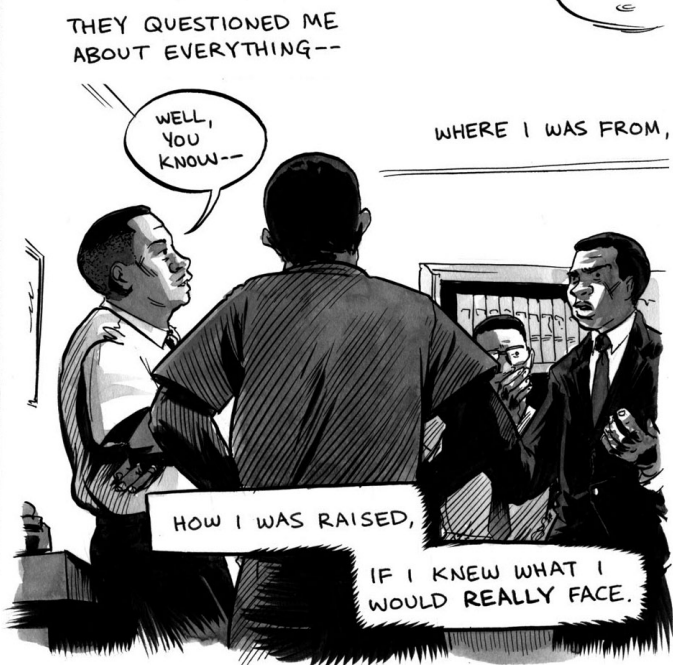
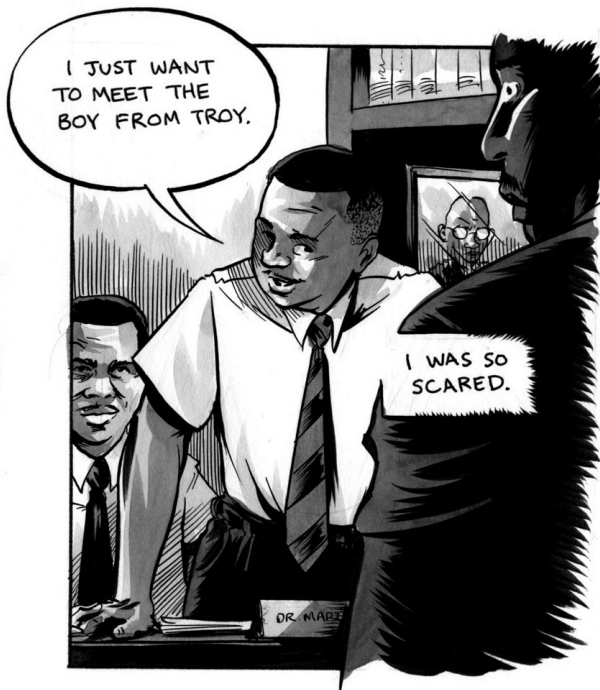
YES SIR. ATTORNEY GRAY?

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DRIVE OVER TO THE CHURCH.

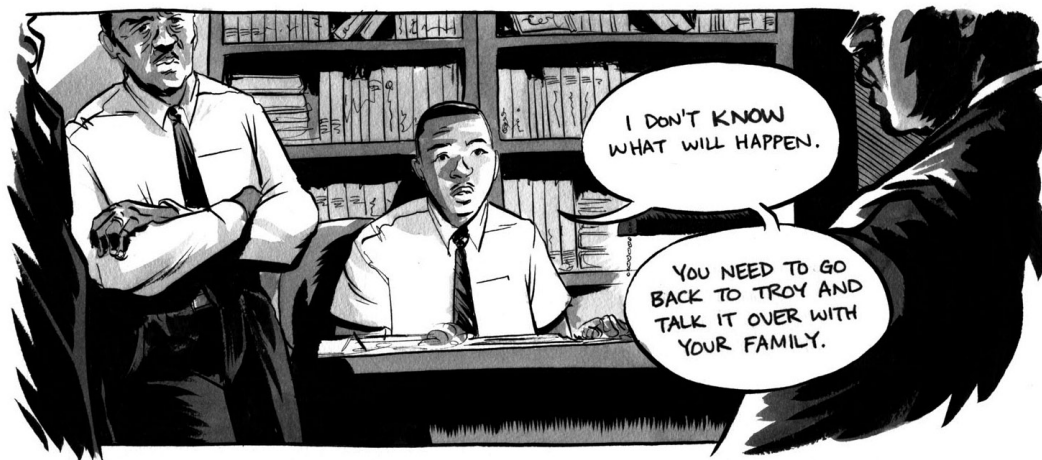
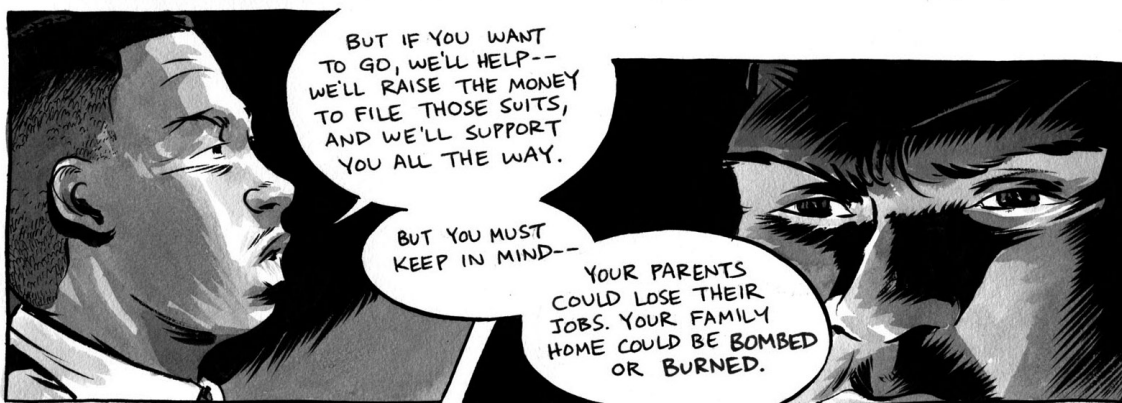
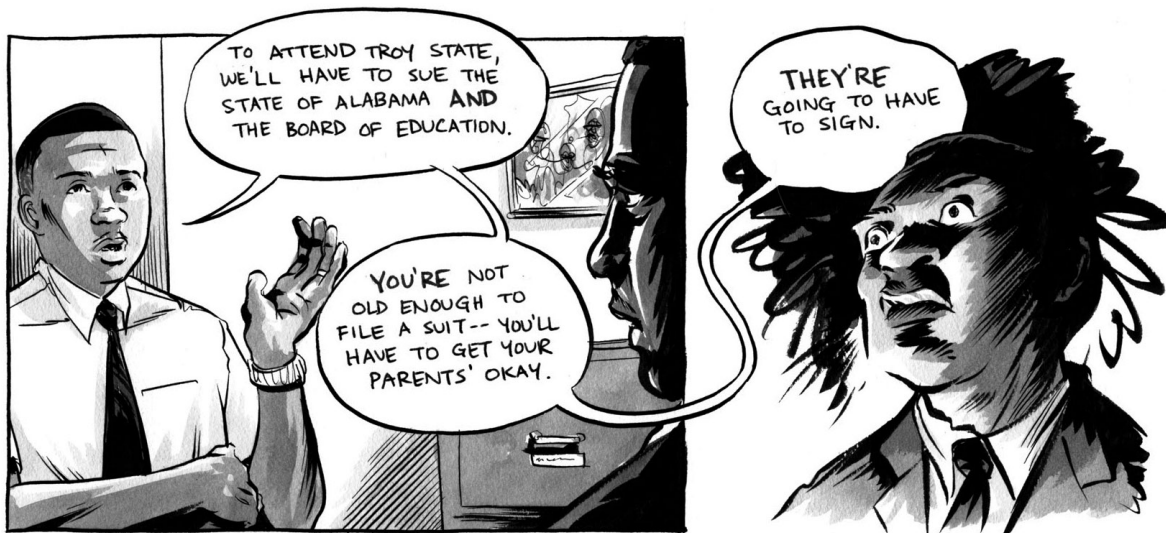






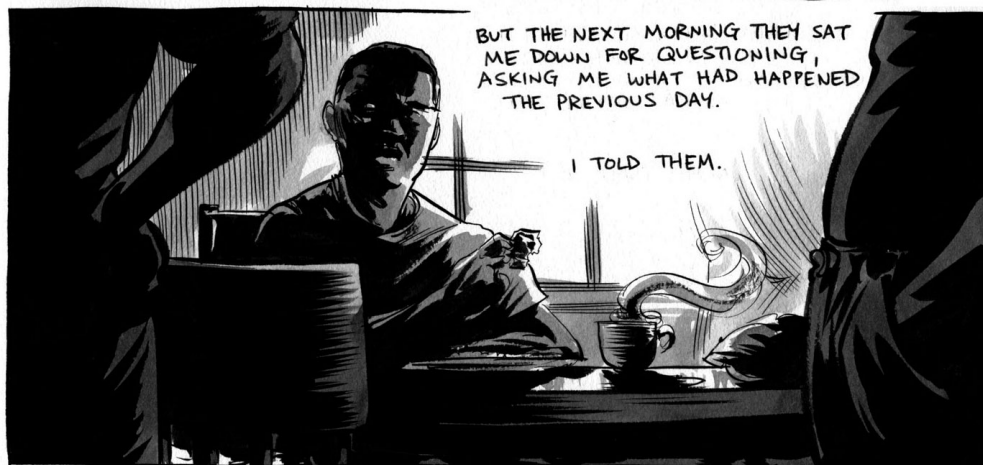








MY FATHER DIDN'T SAY A WORD TO ME ON THE RIDE BACK FROM THE BUS STATION, EITHER.



BUT THE NEXT MORNING THEY SAT ME DOWN FOR QUESTIONING, ASKING ME WHAT HAD HAPPENED THE PREVIOUS DAY.

I TOLD THEM.



AT FIRST THEY WANTED TO BE SUPPORTIVE. BUT THEY WERE AFRAID. NOT JUST FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR THOSE AROUND US, OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS.

THEY SAID THEY DIDN'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH FILING A SUIT AGAINST THE STATE OF ALABAMA. NOTHING. NOT ONE THING.

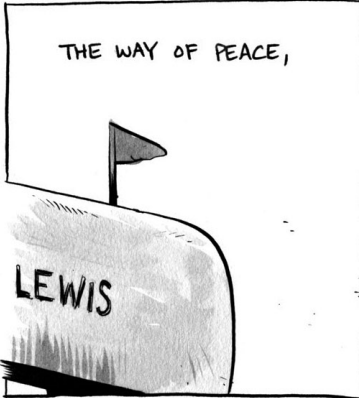
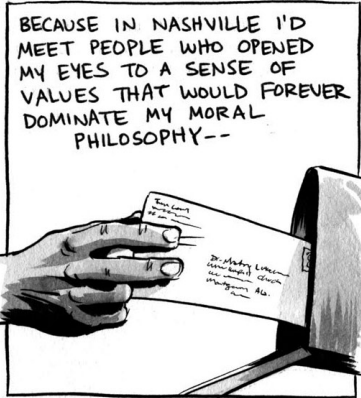
I WAS HEARTBROKEN, BUT IT WAS THEIR DECISION.



I WROTE DR. KING A LETTER EXPLAINING THAT I  
WOULD BE RETURNING TO NASHVILLE IN THE FALL.



LOOKING BACK, IT MUST'VE BEEN  
THE SPIRIT OF HISTORY TAKING  
HOLD OF MY LIFE--



BECAUSE IN NASHVILLE I'D  
MEET PEOPLE WHO OPENED  
MY EYES TO A SENSE OF  
VALUES THAT WOULD FOREVER  
DOMINATE MY MORAL  
PHILOSOPHY--

THE WAY OF PEACE,

THE WAY OF LOVE,

THE WAY OF NON-VIOLENCE.



= KNOCK  
KNOCK =

COME IN?









I WAS ONE OF THE FIRST VOLUNTEERS TO ATTEND.



YES?

IT WASN'T A VERY LARGE MEETING. I WAS THE ONLY STUDENT TO GO FROM MY LITTLE SCHOOL.

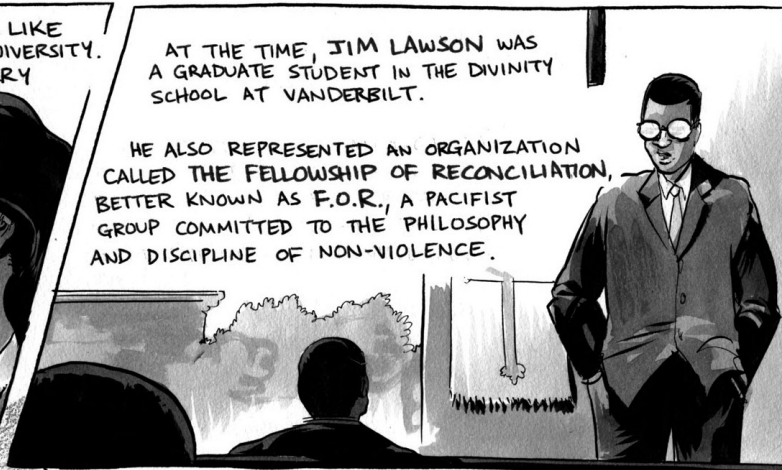


THERE WERE YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE DIANE NASH FROM FISK UNIVERSITY. OTHERS CAME FROM MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE AND TENNESSEE STATE.



AT THE TIME, JIM LAWSON WAS A GRADUATE STUDENT IN THE DIVINITY SCHOOL AT VANDERBILT.

HE ALSO REPRESENTED AN ORGANIZATION CALLED THE FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION, BETTER KNOWN AS F.O.R., A PACIFIST GROUP COMMITTED TO THE PHILOSOPHY AND DISCIPLINE OF NON-VIOLENCE.



F.O.R. HAD ALSO PUBLISHED A POPULAR COMIC BOOK CALLED MARTIN LUTHER KING AND THE MONTGOMERY STORY, WHICH EXPLAINED THE BASICS OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE AND NON-VIOLENT ACTION AS TOOLS FOR DESEGREGATION.

HER KING  
AND  
GOMERY

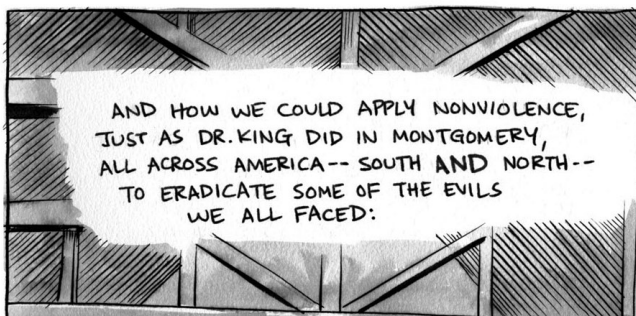
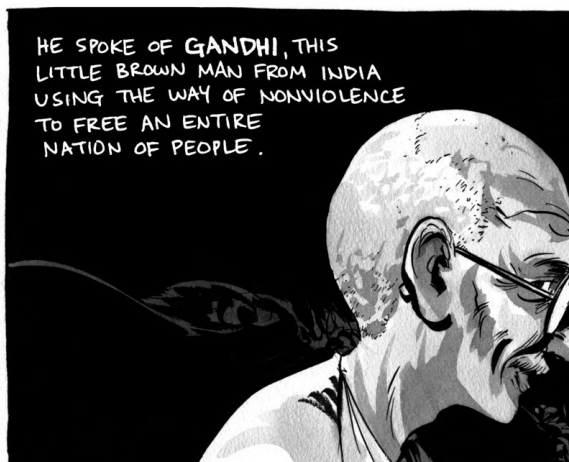
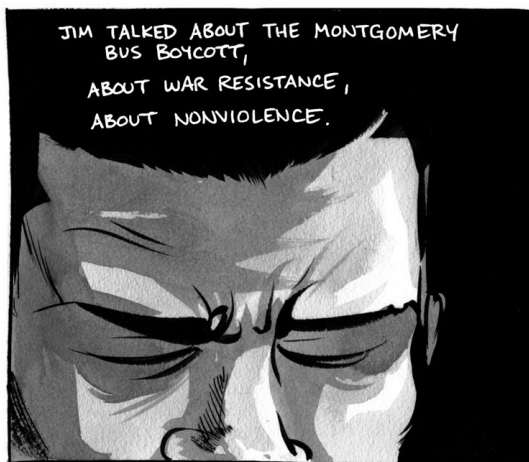
10c

NEGROES  
NEW WAY TO  
RACIAL-  
CRIMINATION.



I WANT TO START WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, WITH STUDENTS-- HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS.





HIS WORDS LIBERATED ME.

I THOUGHT, THIS IS IT...

THIS IS THE WAY OUT.

